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comprise a single continuous molded product.

14. A toothbrush according to claim 9 wherein said handle and head are separate elements, and said handle's distal end and said head's proximal end are coupled together forming said hinge, and said spring element is situated between and engaging said distal and proximal ends of said handle and said head respectively.

15. A toothbrush according to claim 14 wherein said handle's distal end and said head's proximal end comprises hinge elements of said hinge, and said spring element comprises a spring-biased detent in one said hinge elements and the other of said hinge elements has a first detent-engaging element, said detent and first detent-engaging element comprising a spring coupling, whereby said predetermined threshold force level is the force required to overcome the spring coupling to release said head to pivot out of said first orientation.

16. A toothbrush according to claim 15, further comprising a second detent-engaging element spaced from said first detent-engaging element on said other of said hinge elements, said second detent-engaging element situated to releasably secure said head in said second orientation rearward of said first orientation when said head is pivoted out of said first orientation.

17. A toothbrush according to claim 9 wherein said handle's distal end and said head's proximal end comprises hinge elements of said hinge, and wherein said spring element comprises a resilient element extending from one of said hinge elements and releasably engaging the other of said hinge elements.

18. A toothbrush operable by a user and comprising a head with bristles which extend in a generally first forward direction from said head, a handle, and

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a hinge connecting said head and said handle, said head having a normal position relative to the handle, said hinge comprising biasing means urging said head to remain in said normal position, said head being pivotable about said hinge from said normal position backwards in a second direction generally opposite from said first direction when a force exceeding a predetermined threshold level of said biasing means is applied to said head in said second direction, said head remaining out of said normal position until said head is manually returned to said normal position by said user.

18 19. A toothbrush according to claim 9 wherein said hinge comprises a pre-stressed bi-stable spring having two alternative shapes, said spring in its pre-stressed state being generally stiff and tending to stay in such state until a force exceeding a predetermined threshold level is applied to said spring which causes it to snap to its other shape, said spring coupled to said head and to said handle, whereby said head automatically pivots to its second orientation when a force exceeding said threshold level force is applied thereto.

20. A toothbrush according to claim 19 wherein said head automatically returns to its first orientation when a force exceeding said threshold force is applied to said head in said first direction.

21. A toothbrush according to claim 20 wherein said handle has a central longitudinal axis, and said bi-stable spring comprises a central strip generally parallel to said handle axis and two tension strips adjacent and generally parallel to said central strip, said central strip being resilient and in compression and having a bow configuration.

22. A toothbrush according to claim 20 wherein each of said tension strips is bendable in the general area of their connection to said head.

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24. A toothbrush according to claim 23 wherein each of said tension strips is bendable in the general area of its connection to said head.

26. A toothbrush comprising a handle, a head with bristles and a neck interconnecting said handle and said head in a predetermined first angular relationship, said head being bendable relative to said handle about a bend axis in said neck, said neck having a predetermined stiffness wherein said neck resists bending of said head relative to said handle, said neck being bendable about said bend axis to a second angular relationship different from said first angular relationship and back again when a force is applied to said head that overcomes said stiffness of said neck.

27. An automatic pressure release toothbrush operable by a user and comprising a handle, a head extending from said handle, said head having bristles extending generally in a first direction designated “forward”, said head having a first normal, operable orientation relative to said handle, said head, when a force greater than

a predetermined threshold level is applied to said head in a direction generally opposite said first direction, automatically pivoting relative to said handle out of said first orientation to a second inoperable orientation rearward of said first orientation, said head remaining in said second orientation until it is manually returned by said user to said first orientation.

28. A method of reducing the risk of damaging tooth enamel and/or gums during brushing of a person's teeth with a toothbrush, comprising:

- a- providing a toothbrush with a handle, head and bristles extending from said exceeding a head,
- b- providing a pivotable joint between said handle and said head, and
- c- configuring said pivotable joint such that upon application of a force predetermined threshold level on said head, said head will automatically pivot or bend producing a toothbrush configuration which is either inoperative or so awkward as to effectively preventing further brushing.

29. A method of reducing the risk of damaging tooth enamel and/or gums during brushing of a person's teeth with a toothbrush, comprising:

- a- providing a toothbrush with a handle, head and bristles extending from said head,
- b- providing a pivotable joint at a selected location along the length of said handle and head, and
- c- configuring said pivotable joint such that upon application of a force exceeding a predetermined threshold level on said head, said joint will automatically change said toothbrush configuration into one that will be either inoperative or so

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30. A method of teaching a person how to avoid applying pressure of an unsafe magnitude to teeth and/or gums while brushing his/her teeth with a toothbrush, comprising :

- a- providing a toothbrush with a handle, head and bristles extending from said head,
- b- providing a pivotable joint at a selected location along the length of said handle and head, and
- c- configuring said pivotable joint such that upon application of a force exceeding a predetermined threshold level on said head, said joint will automatically disable the toothbrush from further use.